

Chair Roemer, and members of the Government Oversight Committee:

My name is Cordelia Van der Veer, and I am a student at The Ohio State University and a member of the National Advisory Board of Students Demand Action for gun safety in America. As citizens of Ohio, we all care about keeping “the heart of it all” safe for everyone. However, in an average year, 1,702 Ohioans are shot and killed. Based on a report from Everytown, gun violence costs Ohio \$22.3 billion each year, of which \$493.7 million is paid by taxpayers.

I support HB 186 because it incentivizes citizens to utilize firearm safety devices, creating safer communities for the children and students of Ohio. According to Everytown tracking, as of September 25th there have been at least 22 unintentional shootings in 2023 alone by children in Ohio that have resulted in death or injury. This makes Ohio tied for the second most unintentional shootings in the United States so far this year. We should be a state leader in healthy communities, not a leader in preventable deaths.

Several unintentional shootings in Ohio involve young children and can be prevented by firearm safety devices like gun locks. Not far from where I live in Columbus, a 14-year-old boy was unintentionally shot in the arm by a friend and became critically injured in June. [In August](#), a 4-year-old boy died after an improperly stored firearm led to an unintentional shooting. As a student, I value safety and do not stand for these preventable incidents happening in surrounding communities

It is clear incentivizing proper firearm storage practices contributes to the safety of our state and encourages responsible gun ownership. Please consider the law-abiding gun owners, students, and innocent children who will be positively affected by HB 186 and vote yes.

Best,

Cordelia Van der Veer
Student at The Ohio State University
National Advisory Board Member of Students Demand Action